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V.—NOTES ON THE EVOLUTION OF ORATIO OBLIQUA.

A benevolent critic of my syntactical lucubrations has said that I seemed at times to be surprised at finding myself a grammarian. 'Il semble encore par moments s'étonner d'être grammairien' (R. de Philologie 1905, p. 167). No truer word was ever penned. I am a journalist that has lost his way or have lost my way into syntax, if not in syntax, and I have been making myself as comfortable as I could all these years in that thicket of thorns.¹ Now the first thing demanded of a journalist, in fact, of any writer, is clearness, and I congratulate myself that I never wrote a line in my life that was not crystal clear—to myself. The charges, with which I am not unfamiliar, of 'Heracletean tenebriosity' and 'Delphic deliverances' I calmly put aside. To be sure, I know full well that syntactical crystals are not popular. The modern scholastic ideal is pulverized sugar, not rock candy; and yet, what foreign substance may not be conveyed in the spoonful of powdered stuff that is laid on the tongue of the expectant pupil? Grammar is one of the hardest of disciplines,

¹ The criticisms of my various performances are a wellspring of joy to me, as I have set forth more than once in this Journal, but among the most delightful of these *πομφολυγοπαλάσματα* is the solemn advice given to me sometime ago by somebody to model myself on Krüger. 'At fourscore' less five 'it is too late a week' to model myself on anybody, but if I have ever had a model, it has been Krüger. If I have fallen short of that model, if I have been obscure where he is simply brief, *tamen est laudanda voluntas*. It was Krüger's terseness that won my admiration from the beginning of my acquaintance with his work in 1850, when I studied up all the references in his *Anabasis* and *Thukydides*, and thus began to get some insight into Greek syntax. In fact, I was so enthusiastic about him that I seriously thought of making a pilgrimage to his retreat near Berlin, but I had heard that his temper was somewhat uncertain, and that the compiler of the 'Aretalogie des weiblichen Geschlechts' was not altogether happy in his interior. And so I forbore. Whether he was my model or whether I simply followed my native sense of honesty, I do not know, but like him, I have tried to learn Greek from the authors and not from the grammars merely, and I am pleased to remark that he did not fool me as he fooled so many slavish copyists by his mischievous perversions of his prooftexts.

and cannot be made easy. It is best administered, if administered at all, in formulae, in 'tabloids' that will melt into the consciousness of the learner after a while. He was a great teacher, greater than many of my critics, to whom is attributed the saying that any rule is a good rule that can be understood after it is explained. A grammar is a manner of catechism. Who understands a catechism at first? I have had to stand up for my good rules, and to wait for the acceptance of my phrasings. And so, I have had a fight of afflictions for my 'resistance to pressure',¹ though it is nothing but the negative of the old conative imperfect; and I have made myself disagreeable—and all in vain—by censuring the slovenly diction of those who confound 'expectation' and 'anticipation';² just as there are those who confound 'hard' and 'obscure' in spite of Coleridge's neat distinction. But, for all that, I have coveted criticism of my style in the interest of usefulness, and I have tried to simplify my language, wherever I could do so without sacrificing what I considered truth. In fact, I am easy to be entreated, and years ago when I was more opinionated than I am now, I gave up my definition of the genitive as the case of the lacking half, in obedience to the protests of my friends. 'Lacking half' is in my judgment much better than 'complement'.

The other count of the indictment, the excessive use of figurative language applies only to the writings that are intended for the profession, and the only thing that I can plead in extenuation is the sad fact that the world does not know the worst. My printed page is to the scandalous procession of imagery, in which I indulge personally, as an orderly dame's school to the Temptation of St. Anthony; and if the secrets of the suppressed *Brief Mentions* were revealed, I should have no standing whatever among the primnesses and proprieties of the guild. And now '<ich schlage> seitwärts in die Büsche' and let whosoever will follow me into the thicket, where reposes the Dornröschen of syntax, the Optative of Oratio Obliqua. But before attacking the Optative, it is necessary to say something about Oratio Obliqua in general, or at all events, to summarize my views on this interesting and difficult subject.

If we begin with our own language, the every-day speech to which the psychological school of grammarians appeals as to

¹ A. J. P. XXII 228.

² A. J. P. XV 399, 523.

a court of last resort, we find that *Oratio Obliqua* is very common. In repeating what we have heard, we shift persons and tenses, 'do' becomes 'did', 'will' becomes 'would'. 'Shall' ought to become 'should' but is often changed into 'would' by a confusion of the point of view. After a principal tense, the tense remains, but the *Oratio Recta* 'shall' often becomes 'will', as after a past tense, it becomes 'would'. These indicatives may have barred out or else disbarred the optative in speech as they have done in literature. *Oratio Recta*, exact quotation, seems to have less scope, except in the speech of the common people, with their parenthetic 'says he' and 'says I'.

The accusative and infinitive has a limited range, chiefly, as we shall see, after verbs of saying and thinking that have creative force, and even these are little used by unbookish people. Of this more hereafter. That is our native outfit when we begin the study of Greek. To be sure, everybody is more or less sophisticated by Latin grammar, but so, for that matter, is our own language.

The first monument we encounter is Homer, and a highly artistic monument it is. In the first place we have to do with a vast mass of *Oratio Recta* discourse. Those who are disposed to ridicule statistics will do well to recall the rash statement of a reputable scholar as to the proportion of *Oratio Recta* in Homer and in Vergil.¹ The speeches in Homer, *Il.* and *Od.* together constitute half the bulk of the poems. In Vergil, 38 per cent. In Thukydides, the speeches constitute a fifth. This honest style, if we dare not call it naïve style, of reporting, holds its own in literature from the earliest to the latest time. The art of Homer and the inartificiality of the New Testament are at one in this. Among the favorite introductory words in Greek is *εἶπε* from the *εἰπέ τε μῦθον* of Homer to the *τάδ' εἶπεν* of the Attic reporter: *Δημοσθένης Δημοσθένους Παιανιεύς τάδ' εἶπεν*. Hence the preference of *εἶπε* for *ὅτι*, when the *ὅτι* stage is reached, for so far as we can judge from literature the *ὅτι* stage is later. We are centuries off from the quotation *ὅτι*, which first makes its appearance in the amateur orator Andokides. Sparingly used in classical literature, it is found in the Septuagint; it is found in the New Testament e. g. Matth. 9, 18: *προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων ὅτι Ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν*. Everything seems to point to colloquial

¹ A. J. P. VII 398.

usage, a kind of superfoetation of the $\delta\tau\iota$ form. This $\delta\tau\iota$ form of Oratio Obliqua is so restricted in Homer that we have a right to assume that it is an extension of the familiar Homeric construction of $\delta\tau\iota$ after verbs of intellectual perception, $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\iota\nu$ $\delta\tau\iota$ following the pattern of $\gamma\upsilon\omega\nu\alpha\iota$ $\delta\tau\iota$. It is not a hopelessly wide step from 'he knew that' to 'he said that'. 'Saying' is, or pretends to be, an ejection of knowledge. And it is to be noted that the rule for the tenses is the same. After verbs of knowing the Homeric tenses are independent. They stand on their own bottom, and are not influenced by the leading verb. So, too, after verbs of saying.

The statistics of Schmitt¹ shew that this form of Oratio Obliqua has scarcely any scope in Homer. Even with $\epsilon\iota\pi\epsilon\iota\nu$ honours are easy between the acc. and inf. and the $\delta\tau\iota$ construction, which is the rule in prose, though not so exclusively as is laid down by some. Not $\delta\tau\iota$ but the accusative and infinitive is the dominant form in Greek, as it is in Latin, and the evolution follows the same lines in both languages. Verbs of Creation alike in Greek and in Latin, verbs of Will and Endeavor take the accusative and infinitive by right, and no more artificial explanation is necessary than is needed to explain accusative and dative. The tenses of the infinitive are present, aorist and perfect, and the time future, as a matter of course. The next step forward is taken when certain verbs of creation become specialized, and the element of will is deadened. $\phi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$ is not simply 'say', to begin with: it is 'aver', it is 'assert', it has the emphasis and the negative of $\theta\mu\nu\nu\mu\iota$. Hence the phenomenon—of which so much was once made,—that the aorist infinitive is used as a future after $\phi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$. No wonder. $\phi\eta\mu\acute{\iota}$ is ultimately a verb of creation. But the differentiation sets in. The negative $\mu\acute{\eta}$ becomes the negative $\sigma\upsilon$, and attaches itself to the leading verb, $\sigma\upsilon \phi\eta\mu\iota$, $\sigma\upsilon\kappa \sigma\acute{o}\mu\alpha\iota$; and the future infinitive fills out the scheme. The infinitive becomes the reflexion of Oratio Recta. There may have been an original future infinitive. If so, it was = $\mu\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ + infinitive, like the old future itself. The Latin *-rum esse, -um iri, fore ut* betray the awkwardness of the innovation. The future infinitive arose from the necessity of the case, as did the future optative long afterwards. In the further evolution, Latin accusative and infinitive and Greek accusative and infinitive go apart at many points. Especially noteworthy is the difference after verbs of sensuous perception, where the Greek

¹ A. J. P. XIV 376.

takes the participle, and inartificial Latin, the infinitive. But more important than any difference in detail is a far-reaching dissidence in principle. The Greek *Oratio Obliqua* clings closer to *Oratio Recta* than does the Latin *Oratio Obliqua*. In Greek, you can restore *Oratio Recta* from *Oratio Obliqua* with much more certainty than you can in Latin. Latin *Oratio Obliqua* is more directly conceived, whereas in Greek the image of *Oratio Recta* is far more distinctly present. The Greek translation of the *Bellum Gallicum* may be the work of a modern scholar, but it is Greek in renouncing the reproduction of Caesar's complicated *Oratio Obliqua*, and the transfer of Latin *Oratio Obliqua* to *Oratio Recta*, and *vice versa*, is often a hopeless puzzle, out of which I extracted some amusement in earlier days. As for English and German accusative and infinitive, the evolution from the native accusative and infinitive to the *Oratio Obliqua* accusative and infinitive never throve. The English verbs of saying and thinking that idiomatically take the accusative and infinitive show throughout their kindred with verbs of creation,—‘declare’, ‘judge’, ‘deem’ ‘count’.¹ Such phrases as ‘He is said to have been’ betray foreign influence. They are literal translations from the Latin, which has had a dominating influence on English syntax, directly and indirectly. Interesting is the quarrel that has raged about the use of the word ‘claim’. Years ago I translated ‘*Ait fuisse navium celerrimus*’, ‘claims to have been the fastest craft afloat’, as a manner of mimicry of the Latin construction. I found out afterwards that Munro did not hesitate to use the word, but the late Mr. Herbert Spencer in his *Facts and Comments* objects vigorously to the use of ‘claim’ for ‘say’, ‘assert’, ‘affirm’, ‘allege’. It is a verb of creation that has not been accepted as a verb of saying. To the thoughtful student of language, nothing is more interesting than these recrudescences of feeling.

As Modern Greek has discarded the infinitive, and with it the accusative and infinitive, so the Romanic languages have reverted to the finite form, with variations that I cannot undertake to discuss in detail. There are all manner of queer infinitive survivals in this domain, not the least interesting of which is the Latin historical infinitive in the form of *de* with infinitive. It is

¹See Carl Krickart, *Der Acc. mit d. Inf. in der Englischen Sprache*, besonders in der Zeit der Elisabeth. Göttingen, 1877.

a familiar Gallicism, adopted by Thackeray in a spirit of mockery, and gravely cited in that excellent little book by Leo Kellner, *English Historical Syntax*, as a specimen of a rare infinitive.

That the extension of verbs of creation to verbs of saying and thinking has but scant root in the popular consciousness is shown by the decadence of the construction, the return to primitive conditions. Hypotaxis is as old as our record, but somehow accusative and infinitive had little range in subordinate sentences. The imperative use is more primitive, and so we find the imperative infinitive in Greek hypotaxis, as we find the imperative infinitive in English hypotaxis (A. J. P. XIV 125).

The next form to be considered is the use of the optative as the representative of the indicative in Oratio Obliqua. 'Modusverschiebung' is a word of fear to many grammarians. It is too mechanical. Unfortunately much of language is mechanical. We inherit phrases, we inherit syntactical constructions, which are used as schemes without further analysis. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, as I have said elsewhere, issue conditional sentences that are as faultlessly constructed as if the speakers had learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians and penetrated all the Egyptian darkness of psychological syntax. All that we can do is to watch the types of conditional sentences that are preferred, and build our psychological structure on those preferences. Doubtless the 'Modusverschiebung' has its *raison d'être*. The subjunctive under the influence of the less real past becomes optative, just as the wish is less real than the command. But, however we may account for it, the transfer is there, and what is more, it abides from Homer down to the sophistic age (A. J. P. XXIII 129). There is, however, no optative for indicative in Homer except in the question. Here the optative does represent the indicative, as it does the subjunctive. Even *ὥς ἔλθοι* Od. 24, 237 is to be considered interrogative (S. C. G. § 310), for the line between relative and interrogative is often blurred to the Greek consciousness. Compare the notable instance in Pind. O. 6, 49: *εἴπετο παῖδα τὸν Εὐάδνα τέκoi* where *τέκoi* is due to *εἴπετο*. This optative, then, is a pseudo-optative, to begin with. The case is analogous to that of the diphthongal *εἰ*, in which we distinguish between the real *εἰ* in *γένηι*, and the false *εἰ* in *εἰς*. In time this pseudo-optative spread to other indicatives and actually generated a future optative to match the other tenses just as the Oratio Obliqua infinitive generated a future infinitive to match

the other infinitives. The first example occurs Pind. O. 9, 116: *σχήσοι* in an interrogative complex, and everyone must have noticed how often the indicative of the future is retained, as if in protest against the usurper. In fact, we may say that there is a constant fight against the optative in the dependent clauses. It is felt to be unsatisfactory, to be ambiguous, and the whole thing is 'turned into hell' with a lot of more or less artificial constructions. The *Oratio Obliqua* optative falls away early. One cannot help asking whether it had any deep root in the popular consciousness. It was kept alive by a kind of mechanical 'Modusverschiebung'. As the infinitive in *Oratio Obliqua* took on an alien negative, so the optative in *Oratio Obliqua* took on an alien negative, such as it had taken on with the potential optative, when the language was feeling its way to more exact futures. But the *Oratio Obliqua* optative cannot be called a potential, cannot be subsumed under the potential. Doubtless, there was a super-induced feeling of irresponsibility, such as we find in the latest form of *Oratio Obliqua*, *ὥς* with the participle. But the fact that its construction is limited to the dependence on historical tenses is significant of its origin, and we have no right to assume that the sporadic appearance of an optative after a principal tense shows the basic condition of things. In fact, it might be contended that the 'partial obliquity'—*ὥς* with the participle—came in to supply the need for a form of universal applicability. The few optatives after principal tenses in the Greek of the classic period are nearly all susceptible of easy explanation—and those of a later day do not count. They belong to the artificial literature of a time when the optative was practically dead.

The English optative of *Oratio Obliqua* seems also to be dead, or to live on in the language of the vulgar and in the dialects. One hears sometimes, 'He said that he were'. Indeed, the English optative (subj.) seems to be doomed. The indicative and sundry forms of periphrastic conjugation have taken its place. The books make a difference between 'If I am' and 'If I be', 'before I am' and 'before I be', but even such broad differences as separate 'If I were' and 'If I was' are often effaced. 'Lest I be' holds its own after a fashion, but periphrasis is often substituted. Still the optative (subj.) is not dead. Where form survives anywhere, function survives everywhere. We speak of a nominative and accusative, a genitive-dative dual, because there are nominative and accusative, genitive and dative forms

elsewhere. The dative and ablative plural in Latin are dative and ablative, because the dative and ablative are differentiated elsewhere. We have in English nominative and objective cases, by reason of the pronominal forms. The optative (subj.) singular of the verb keeps the plural alive. Nay, I had fainted = I should have fainted, is not felt as an indicative—so there may be, after all, an English Oratio Obliqua Optative (subj.)—as there is a German Oratio Obliqua Optative (subj.). But what is the evidence for a Latin Oratio Obliqua Subjunctive outside the dependent clauses?¹ All the passages cited fall into the category of surprise, and the first movement of surprise is deprecatory, whether the news is good or bad, so that we are in the sphere of the optative of wish, and we are reminded of Dittmar's definition of the subjunctive. This subjunctive of surprise, when it is introduced by a particle, resembles very closely the accusative with infinitive of surprise. Both forms offer an objection. 'The one <accusative and infinitive> objects to the idea; the other to any state of things that could produce the result' (L. G.³ 558 N.). But any such differentiation in Greek would be impossible, as there is only one form, the infinitive,—in the later language largely with the article. The surprise lies in the question, which is extra-linguistic, if I may say so. But to derive the whole structure of Optative Oratio Obliqua from dephlogisticated surprise does not commend itself absolutely. Call it a deprecation of responsibility, and we seem to be nearer the mark. And this is the feeling that may have been superinduced in Greek, even if the origin is as mechanical as it seems to have been. Thought works itself into expression in a variety of ways, and there are remarkable interchanges between infinitive and optative that are not to be neglected in this whole range of study, so that I have ventured to call the optative, the finite form of the infinitive. In English, the nominal infinitive goes hand in hand with an ideal periphrastic 'To do' 'that he should do', 'to have done' 'that he should have done'—both idealistic. The two Oratio Obliqua forms are closely related. A remarkable development of an Oratio Obliqua or rather a Partial Obliquity form is *ὥς* with the participle. It is not an abridged conditional proposition, though the Romans so conceived it, for nothing is plainer than the fact that the *tamquam* c. subj. of silver Latin was an imitation of this construction, which has in it the same shifting of responsibility that has been noticed

¹ See J. J. Schlicher, A. J. P. XXVI 73.

in the optative Oratio Obliqua. The negative is not the negative of the conditional participle, but the negative of the optative in Oratio Obliqua. The $\omega\varsigma$ retains the subjective character, which it has largely, though not wholly, lost in the combination with the finite verb. $\text{o}\iota\chi\ \omega\varsigma$ with the participle corresponds to *non quod* with the subjunctive, and the language enriches itself, though comparatively late, with an easy way of shifting responsibility. $\text{\textcircled{r}}\iota$ causal with the optative is one of the rarest of combinations, $\omega\varsigma$ with the participle reigns in its stead; and it may not be without interest to observe that $\omega\varsigma$ with the participle, an evasion of responsibility for a statement of fact, follows in the wake of $\text{\textcircled{r}}\sigma(\text{\textcircled{r}}\epsilon)$ with the infinitive, an evasion of responsibility for the expression of purpose.

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